

In re Patent Application of:
MORIN ET AL.
Serial No. 10/701,165
Filing Date: November 4, 2003

In the Claims:

Claims 1-11 (Cancelled).

12. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device comprising:

a semiconductor substrate;
at least one first MOS transistor and at least one second MOS transistor in said semiconductor substrate;
a dielectric layer on said at least one first MOS transistor and on said at least one second MOS transistor; and
~~an etch-stop layer comprising a first~~ etch-stop layer covering said at least one first MOS transistor and having a first residual stress level; and
a second etch-stop layer covering said at least one first MOS transistor and said at least one second MOS transistor and having a second residual stress level different than the first residual stress level.

13. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 12, wherein said first and second etch-stop layers have different thicknesses.

14. (Previously Presented) A semiconductor device according to Claim 12, wherein said dielectric layer includes contact openings therethrough for providing electrical connection to said at least one first MOS transistor and to said at least one second MOS transistor.

15. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 12, wherein said at least one first MOS

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transistor comprises NMOS transistors and said at least one second MOS transistor comprises PMOS transistors, and wherein said first and second etch-stop layers have opposite residual stress levels.

16. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 15, wherein said first etch-stop layer has a positive residual stress level above said NMOS transistors, and said second etch-stop layer has a negative residual stress level above said PMOS transistors.

17. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 12, wherein said at least one first MOS transistor comprises PMOS transistors and said at least one second MOS transistor comprises NMOS transistors, and wherein said first and second etch-stop layers have opposite residual stress levels.

18. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 17, wherein said first etch-stop layer has a negative residual stress level above said PMOS transistors, and said second etch-stop layer has a positive residual stress level above said NMOS transistors.

19. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 12, wherein a zone formed by said second etch-stop layer overlapping said first etch-stop layer has a substantially zero residual stress level.

20. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device

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comprising:

- a semiconductor substrate;
- at least one NMOS transistor and at least one PMOS transistor in said semiconductor substrate;
- a dielectric layer on said at least one NMOS transistor and on said at least one PMOS transistor; and
- ~~an etch-stop layer comprising~~ a first etch-stop layer covering said at least one NMOS transistor and having a first residual stress level; and
- a second etch-stop layer covering said at least one NMOS transistor and said at least one PMOS transistor and having a second residual stress level different than the first residual stress level.

21. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 20, wherein said first and second etch-stop layers having different thicknesses.

22. (Previously Presented) A semiconductor device according to Claim 20, wherein said dielectric layer includes contact openings therethrough for providing electrical connection to said at least one NMOS transistor and to said at least one PMOS transistor.

23. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 20, wherein said first and second etch-stop layers have opposite residual stress levels.

24. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 23, wherein said first etch-stop layer has

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a positive residual stress level above said at least one NMOS transistor, and said second etch-stop layer has a negative residual stress level above said at least one PMOS transistor.

25. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 20, wherein a zone formed by said second etch-stop layer overlapping said first etch-stop layer has a substantially zero residual stress level.

26. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device comprising:

- a semiconductor substrate;
- at least one PMOS transistor and at least one NMOS transistor in said semiconductor substrate;
- a dielectric layer on said at least one PMOS transistor and on said at least one NMOS transistors; and
- ~~an etch-stop layer comprising a first etch-stop~~ layer covering said at least one PMOS transistor and having a first residual stress level; and
- a second etch-stop layer covering said at least one PMOS transistor and said at least one NMOS transistor and having a second residual stress level different than the first residual stress level.

27. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 26, wherein said first and second etch-stop layers have different thicknesses.

28. (Previously Presented) A semiconductor device according to Claim 26, wherein said dielectric layer includes

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contact openings therethrough for providing electrical connection to said at least one PMOS transistor and to said at least one NMOS transistor.

29. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 26, wherein said first and second etch-stop layers have opposite residual stress levels.

30. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 29, wherein said first etch-stop layer has a negative residual stress level above said at least one PMOS transistor, and said second etch-stop layer has a positive residual stress level above said at least one NMOS transistor.

31. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device according to Claim 26, wherein a zone formed by said second etch-stop layer overlapping said first layer has a substantially zero residual stress level.

32. (Currently amended) A method for fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

forming at least one first MOS transistor and at least one second MOS transistor in a semiconductor substrate;
forming a dielectric layer on the at least one first MOS transistor and on the at least one second MOS transistor;
and

~~forming an etch-stop layer comprising~~ forming a first etch-stop layer covering the at least one first MOS transistor and having a first residual stress level; and
forming a second etch-stop layer covering the at

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least one first MOS transistor and the at least one second MOS transistor and having a second residual stress level different than the first residual stress level.

33. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 32, wherein the first and second etch-stop layers have different thicknesses.

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 32, further comprising forming contact openings through the dielectric layer for providing electrical connection to the at least one first MOS transistor and to the at least one second MOS transistor.

35. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 32, wherein forming the first layer comprises:

forming the first etch-stop layer covering the at least one first MOS transistor and the at least one second MOS transistor;

forming a mask on the at least one first MOS transistor;

removing the first etch-stop layer on the at least one second MOS transistor; and

removing the mask.

36. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 32, further comprising performing a localized treatment of the first and second etch-stop layers that overlap the at least one first MOS transistor for modifying the second residual stress level of the second layer.

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37. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 36, wherein performing the localized treatment comprises implanting ions into the second etch-stop layer.

38. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 37, wherein germanium ions are implanted into the second etch-stop layer.